

## Mid-Level Leader Program FAQs

*Developing People to Accomplish the Mission*

**Q: Why is NASA implementing a mid-level leadership development program?**

**A:** The Office of Human Capital Management (OHCM) recognizes the critical role of the NASA mid-level leader in accomplishing the Agency's mission. This program provides significant leadership development for a diverse, Agency-wide group of individuals who have high potential for assuming greater leadership responsibilities in formal management or program/project management roles.

**Q: What are the objectives of the program?**

**A:** The objectives of the program are to help participants:

- 1) Enhance self awareness and personal effectiveness in critical NASA leadership skills including communication, trust building, influence, decision making, and leading/managing change.
- 2) Build teamwork, collaboration and communication across traditional boundaries including Centers, programs, projects, civil servants/contractors, as well as generations.
- 3) Expand understanding of NASA, including Agency-wide issues and their impact on NASA's mission.
- 4) Apply learning for greater success in current responsibilities and during a rotation, as well as in the future.
- 5) Build professional relationships within an Agency-wide cohort of high potential individuals, as well as with mentors and respected leaders throughout the Agency.

**Q: What are the program benefits?**

**A:** This program is designed to accelerate development by helping the participants broaden their perspective and exposure, gain leadership experiences, strengthen critical boundary spanning leadership skills, and build and leverage Agency-wide relationships. Participants will develop the following leadership skills and competencies:

- Leading Teams and Collaborating
- Cognitive Skills: Decision Making and Problem Solving
- Leading and Managing Change
- Business Acumen
- Communicating and Relating to Others
- Personal Effectiveness

**Q: What is the NASA Mid-Level Leader experience?**

**A:** Those selected for the NASA Mid-Level Leader Program will have the opportunity for:

- **Core Learning** – experience a dynamic, interactive environment during four core learning sessions held at different Centers.
- **Developmental Rotation** – participate in a three to six month career-broadening rotation that provides exposure, expanded perspective, and learning in areas critical for growth
- **Well Designed Individual Development Plan (IDP)** – create a focused IDP to accelerate and guide development
- **Practical Application** – Apply learning and best practices during learning sessions, on-the-job, and during the rotation.
- **Strategic Mentoring** – establish a strong mentoring relationship with a respected NASA leader to support development.
- **Cascading Development** – build skills and assist in the development of another person, by helping to prepare an individual to step into the participant's role during the three to six month rotation.
- **Manager-Participant Development Partnership and Center Sponsor** – enhance and maintain strong communication and connection with his/her Center through development of a strong manager/participant development partnership.
- **Professional Coaching** – accelerate skill development and address challenges by working with a professional coach.
- **Assessments** – gain valuable insights and enhance self awareness through feedback from a 360-degree assessment and other assessment tools.

**Q: What is the length of the program and where will it be offered?**

**A:** This is a 16-month program comprised of four, week-long core learning sessions, a rotation, and other IDP driven activities that are spread out over the 16 months in order to maintain continuity with current Center responsibilities. Because the core learning sessions will be held at different NASA Centers, travel is required. Other travel requirements will depend on how the rotation is structured.

**Q: When will the Mid-Level Leader Program implementation occur?**

**A:** The program will launch in December of 2009 and run through March of 2011. Additional details will be provided as the program is scheduled.

**Q: What is the program selection criterion? Can anyone participate?**

**A:** The target audience for the Mid-Level Leader Program is GS Level 13-14 civil service employees (engineering, science, and administrative professionals) with at least two years of NASA service and a strong commitment to leadership development., demonstrated by training or developmental activities related to leadership. Participants apply learning during the program to enhance their effectiveness in current roles, and to prepare for future responsibilities. During the application process, candidates and Center managers identify how the individual can utilize the development opportunity to contribute to mission success. Candidates may self-nominate, and will then be selected competitively from across the Agency as part of NASA's succession planning process that includes both a Center and Agency-wide phase. Participants will be required to sign a continuing service agreement with NASA prior to program acceptance.

**Q: What is the application process?**

**A:** Potential candidates must complete a program application that also includes a section for their supervisor to complete. The Centers will conduct interviews and will forward their proposed selections to the Office of Human Capital Management . At that point, a panel of Agency senior leaders will review all applications and conduct additional interviews, resulting in final selections for the program.

**Q: Where can I complete my developmental rotation?**

**A:** The 3-6 month career broadening rotation provides an opportunity to gain exposure, expanded perspectives and learning in new areas identified as critical for growth. Participants are encouraged to rotate to another Center or HQ, if possible. However, they can also conduct their rotation in another organization in the same geographical area or another position within the Center, if that offers sufficient challenge and meets their specific developmental needs.

**Q: Is there pre-work required for program participation?**

**A:** Pre-work, including assessments and some selected reading assignments, is an integral part of the program. It is expected that participants will have completed all pre-work prior to each core learning session.

**Q: What about funding?**

**A:** The Office of Human Capital Management funds training, per diem, and related travel for the Core Learning Sessions and rotation, once the participant starts the program. Travel required as part of additional developmental work assignments is paid by the host organization under separate travel orders.

**Q: Who can I contact for additional information? Is there a website?**

**A:** Please contact your Center's Training Office for application information and due dates. Other information can be found on the Training and Leadership Development website: <http://nasapeople.nasa.gov/Training/default.htm>